

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-12, 14-17, 19-21, 23, 25-29 and 31-32 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 11, 14, 23 and 28 are amended and claims 2, 13, 24 and 30 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Various amendments are made to the claims for clarity and are unrelated to issues of patentability.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the amendments place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth below and do not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration. More specifically, the above amendments amend each of independent claims 1, 11, 23 and 28 to include features recited in allowable dependent claims 20, 22, 26 and 31, respectively. Thus, no further issues are raised by this amendment. Entry is therefore proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Office Action's indication that claims 2-10, 13-17, 19, 21, 24, 25 and 30 contain allowable subject matter. By this Amendment, independent claim 1 is amended to include allowable features of dependent claim 2, independent claim 11 is amended to include allowable features of dependent claim 13, independent claim 23 is amended to include allowable features of dependent claim 24 and independent claim 28 is amended to include allowable features of dependent claim 30. Thus, each of independent claims 1, 11, 23 and 28 defines patentable subject matter.

Serial No. **10/657,257**

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Reply to Office Action dated October 25, 2006

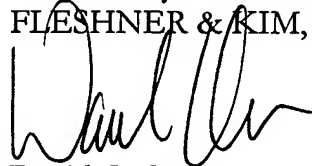
Each of the dependent claims depends from one of the independent claims and therefore defines patentable subject matter at least for this reason. In addition, the dependent claims recite features that further and independently distinguish over the applied references.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3-12, 14-17, 19-21, 23, 25-29 and 31-32 are earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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